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HIGHER MORALE

READILY APPARENT

At the present time a complete change of attitude and morale is visible even to the casual observer. The laboratory sets its own program, which is directed toward a better understanding of this slightly new phenomenon, the atomic bomb. Its staff realizes that any long-range development can be based only on such better understanding. The men in Los Alamos now know what their goals are. They are working with increased enthusiasm and even their number has started to increase.

A year ago it was not easy for a university student to work on his dissertation in the Argonne National Laboratory. Recently such work has been encouraged, helping to provide us with talent for tomorrow. Not only will we have more good physicists, but some of these physicists will acquire with their degrees specific knowledge in nuclear technology. Moreover, such research workers will add to the fund of experience and techniques available in the A.E.C. laboratories.

RELATIONS WITH INDUSTRY

MUST BE WORKED OUT

The greatest problem which faces the Atomic Energy Commission in the coming year is, in my opinion, the relations between the Commission and industry. It would be highly desirable to utilize fully our splendid industrial machines in the atomic projects. This, however, is not easy to accomplish. According to the law and according to the wishes of a great majority of our people, the bulk of atomic information and materials important for further developments must remain under the control of our Government. In fact, both this information and this material is much too dangerous to be allowed to circulate in an uncontrolled manner.

This makes it very difficult for industry to participate in the developments in any other way than as contractor for the United States Government. This type of operation in turn is not in perfect keeping with our traditions of free enterprises. In addition, atomic projects are long-range projects, and in many cases industry will find it difficult to embark upon the necessary long-range plans.

These difficulties cannot be solved by any one sweeping decision. Far-sighted statesmanship, tact, and patience are needed. There is at least

one indication that all of these are available. The relations between the Atomic Energy Commission and the General Electric Company seem to be excellent; the atomic laboratory established by the company is flourishing. There is every reason to hope that similar cooperation will be established with other industrial firms.

This record may not be in keeping with the superlatives of "atomic" phraseology, but this seemingly inconspicuous work may become in time the foundation of the second—the atomic—industrial revolution.

A LETTER FROM EUROPE

[The following letter was written to Dr. V. F. Weisskopf by Dr. J. M. Burgers, Professor of Aero and Hydrodynamics at the Institute of Technology, Delft, Holland.]

December 4, 1947

Yesterday's newspaper mentioned that according to a recent communication by Lillenthal the U.S.A. is engaged upon the production of new atomic weapons. Is this true? If not, who would be responsible for such a piece of bad news?

You had asked me some time ago to write about the impressions made upon us European scientists by American developments. For myself I must say that I am thoroughly upset (What should one say "emtrusset"?) by this piece of information, and I think that many scientists in Holland and many other people will feel the same way. I admit, of course, that the Russians have obstructed all attempts at international agreement on atomic energy. Still I had considered their basic condition, that all existing atom-

ic weapons should be destroyed, as a rational one.

Atomic weapons present such grave dangers to mankind that any state preparing to use them again after the defeat of Japan is menacing our civilization. Now we have accepted more or less the idea that the U.S.A. might preserve already existing bombs. However, the preparation of new weapons of this kind, is outstepping the boundaries of behavior we think indispensable for Democratic communities. You may point to the fact that the Russian government has announced that it is now in possession of atomic power. I do not consider this as sufficient ground for any other state being entitled to do the same.

An announcement such as has been now can only produce new tensions. Moreover, the fact that the decision concerning its use must be concentrated in a very small and special group of people, strengthens all dangers which military organizations of the existing type mean to mankind. It should have been the duty of the American people, or at least of its leaders, to say: we will not let ourselves be overpowered with fear; we value a righteous attitude and respect for civilization above all, and we will not increase our stock of atomic weapons. This might have meant a certain danger for the U.S., but it would have meant a relief to the world. I believe that no efficient steps towards the salvation of civilization can be taken if we are not prepared to accept such risks.

—J. M. BURGERS



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